



School of Advanced Warfighting



- *Second year of advanced study for Majors -- one academic year in length.*
- *Selected graduates of intermediate level schools*
- *15 US Marines, 1 US Navy, 2 US Army, 3 US Air Force, 1 US Civilian, 2 International officers (AY 00-01).*
- *Problem solving and seminar at operational level of war.*

Lieutenant Colonel John Bacon, USMC, Director

MISSION

The School of Advanced Warfighting provides graduate-level military education tailored to complement and expand on the previous year's study at the Command and Staff College or other Intermediate Level School. This follow-on course for selected graduates focuses on the link between what warfighters must do to win campaigns (operational art) and how they prepare themselves for this task (preparation for war). Utilizing a dynamic curriculum and active learning methodologies, SAW prepares its students for significant roles in the preparation of armed forces for success in war, should the nation require that end. The primary goal of the School of Advanced Warfighting is to produce officers who can think for themselves.

ORGANIZATION

Head, School of School of Advanced Warfighting. The Head of SAW is responsible to the Director, CSC, for policy and coordinates through the Dean of Academics for curriculum matters and the Deputy Director for personnel issues. Head, SAW is typically a post-battalion command, active duty USMC Lieutenant Colonel who is a graduate of both SAW and top-level school. The School Head is assisted in this endeavor by the school's two civilian faculty members and the Command and Staff College Department of Academics and Support staff.

Class President. The Class President is the senior U.S. Marine Corps officer in the class. He or she is the point of contact with the Head, SAW for the student chain of command. The Class President coordinates the administrative, academic, athletic, social, and military activities of the class.

EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

Intent

The School's intent is to concentrate – for selected field grade officers – in decision-making and complex problem-solving experience at the operational level, using historical and contemporary issues as a framework and building blocks. In so doing, these officers are preparing for appropriate high-impact, MEF-level and higher service, joint and multinational billets, without prejudice to future command potential. Distinctive long-term influence in both command and staff billets is anticipated.

Curriculum objectives are derived from the intent and define the broad topic areas the curriculum is designed to address:

- ◆ Develop an understanding of the national values, strategy and policies U.S. military institutions are called upon to support. Understand the dynamics of politics, wars, campaigns, battles, and the employment of military forces in situations other than war. Demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between actions taken by military decision makers at all levels and the success or failure of the nation to achieve national security in a way consistent with national values.
- ◆ Understand the relationship between preparation for and conduct of war. Demonstrate understanding of the interrelationships among national values, national policy, strategy, operations, logistics, equipment,

manpower, doctrine, theories of war, geography, and the conduct of war within an international context.

- ◆ Be able, when assigned to duty with the operating forces, to contribute actively to the preparation for, and execution of, military and naval campaigns by enabling operational commanders to make better use of the resources of the supporting establishment, the military departments, and other assets and capabilities in and beyond the Department of Defense.
- ◆ Be able, when assigned to duty with the supporting establishment, to contribute actively to the development of doctrine, manpower policies, equipment acquisition programs, operational plans, plans for the future of the service as an institution, and other similar activities. Help ensure those activities are in harmony with national values and the requirements imposed by the use of military force to support those values.

STUDENT SELECTION

The significant contribution SAW provides to the defense of the United States demands selection of the very best candidates for admission.

SAW accepts into each new class up to 15 Marines, as well as officers from each of the other U.S. services and the international community. Admission is limited to the 24 best qualified officers available. In the admissions process, the following are issues of concern:

- ◆ the student's reasons for his/her interest in SAW;
- ◆ career pattern to date;
- ◆ operational background;
- ◆ academic potential; and
- ◆ proven verbal and written communications skills.

SAW is critically interested in representation by sister services. The active search for candidates extends to other service intermediate level schools and includes qualified candidates from allied nations.

SAW strives to bring the best minds and the best talent to the class. The selection process begins each Fall with a briefing to the current Command and Staff College class and other sister service schools, followed with a request for applications. The one-page application is

endorsed by faculty advisors who have consciously looked for superior candidates since the beginning of the academic year.

Each Command and Staff College applicant is interviewed during November by a formal board consisting of the Command and Staff College Deputy Director, Dean of Academics, the Head of the School of Advanced Warfighting, and a Professor from the School of Advanced Warfighting. Sister service school applicants are interviewed by Head, SAW during his briefing visit to each school.

The board's recommended selections are forwarded to the Director of Command and Staff College and the President of Marine Corps University. Their endorsements are forwarded to each service's headquarters for a final records check and for final authority to enroll.

EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

SAW is a "problem-solving and decision-making" course, rather than a "planning" course, although planning is something we study and practice extensively. The majority of the learning exercises of the School of Advanced Warfighting can be described as follows: The student is presented with a mass of information and given a problem to solve. The problem may be to answer a discussion question, devise a campaign plan, make decisions in a wargame, develop a briefing, submit a point paper, conduct a staff study, or carry out additional research for an essay on an assigned topic. The process becomes iterative: break the problem into its elements, solve these, relate the partial solutions to the greater problem, identify the question on which the whole problem turns, and finally, resolve that question or problem. Implied is the potential for an inherently greater tempo and experience in recognizing and then discarding distracting, non-critical information.

The study of military history develops the analytic mind of the officer, enhances the understanding of military issues, and facilitates the officer's future decision-making efforts. Historical studies are not used didactically; rather, they are approached without bias so that the conclusions resulting from a thorough analysis of established facts can then be evaluated without prejudice. Unable to anticipate all the problems which the graduates might face in their further military service, SAW seeks to equip them to solve any problem which might arise. In short, SAW teaches officers how to think, not what to think.

The Seminar

The seminar is central to the conduct of the academic year and ensures success in meeting the course objectives. In preparation for a seminar, the seminar leader, whether a faculty member or visiting scholar, organizes a set of readings that enable the student to examine the issue under study. Alternative viewpoints or interpretations, conflicting data, etc., are also presented.

In conjunction with the readings, discussion questions are posed to further guide the students in their preparation for the following seminar. These questions are designed to provoke debate and, ultimately, foster a comprehensive understanding of the underlying issues.

In the seminars, students are expected to *contribute* regularly and substantively, without either dominating the session or avoiding engagement. The key to the unique potential of SAW graduates lies largely within the seminar experience.

CURRICULUM

The curriculum is distinguished by three interrelated areas of study:

<p style="text-align: center;">Foundations of the Operational Art Operational Planning Future War</p>
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The lessons in *Foundations of the Operational Art* are concerned with the campaigns, military innovations and contemporary institutions which, taken together, permit analysis of the evolution of the (primarily) American military. Beginning with America's colonial wars, the distinct set of national values that continue to exert influence on our nation's approach to defense and war is examined. Where appropriate, case studies of conflicts involving other sets of belligerents are also examined. These not only provide examples of similar problems in dissimilar environments but also highlight the sources of many of the imported aspects of the American approach to war. The study of military innovation allows the student to appreciate better the impact of changing conditions on the evolution of operational art. Finally, contemporary institutions, both political and

military, are considered in terms of their evolution, their approach to problems in the recent past, and how the attendant experiences exert their influence now.

Operational Planning consists of a series of planning problems during which students execute selected steps of the staff planning process. Emphasis is placed on mission analysis and course of action development that are further refined into a sound and functional concept of operations. The Marine Corps Planning Process, as presented by members of the MAGTF Staff Training Program, provides the framework for plan development in each exercise. The SAW students act as Operational Planning Team leaders and facilitators in teaching the Marine Corps Planning Process to the Command and Staff College students.

In the course of the school year, two *Campaign Rides* are made to areas that lend themselves to the study of warfare at the campaign level. During the fall, several battlefields of the 1864 Virginia Campaign are studied; in the spring, several European battlefields and other points of interest are visited. Thorough study of the operational issues is made of each campaign beforehand, in order to maximize the value of the field studies. These Campaign Rides give the students an opportunity to carry out a most important aspect of campaign studies: walking the ground after in-depth study.

Future Warfighting deals with the importance of recognizing the possibility (if not probability) of existing paradigms losing their relevance under the pressure of changing conditions. While several lessons under Foundations of the Operational Art offer illustrative evidence of "future war past" and how change has been confronted, this section also provides the students with readings on, and exposure to, existing agencies and institutions and their efforts to anticipate and prepare for change and the future. In conjunction with these lessons, each student is required to develop a substantial paper dealing with the consequences of significant change negating underlying assumptions concerning doctrine, operational practice, equipment or organization.

STUDENT EVALUATION

Individual written requirements and frequent oral presentations constitute the graded output of the School. The goal of the SAW Writing Program is to develop the student's written communication skills such that they write with increased clarity, crispness, conciseness and focus in a manner that facilitates each student's individual style of expression. Writing assignments are designed to develop sound and effective research skills; produce well-reasoned, coherent and supportable conclusions; advance an argument and convincingly defend a position; and develop the ability to condense information into a compact, effective written product. Oral presentations take the form of formal briefings and less formal contributions in seminar. The intent is to provide frequent experience in offering well-organized comments that reflect intellectual synthesis and contribute synergistically to seminar-oriented discussions. The Head, School of Advanced Warfighting, evaluates written and oral requirements using guidelines established by the Director, Command and Staff College. The intent of the grading mechanism is to signal to the student measurable strengths and weaknesses, in order to allow for improvement through the school year.

AWARDS

The Clifton B. Cates Award

Presented in honor of General Clifton B. Cates, U.S. Marine Corps, the 19th Commandant of the Marine Corps, by the Navy League to the two SAW students whose year-long, sustained problem solving capabilities, written assignments, participation in planning problems and practical exercises, exchange of ideas and contribution to the execution of the syllabus are judged by both peers and the faculty to best warrant recognition as a superlative student, colleague, leader and contributor.